

## Nuclear ship, Liberty ship together in Norfolk

One for war, one for peace, both with MARAD ties

— by Susan Clark, MARAD Office of Congressional and Public Affairs —

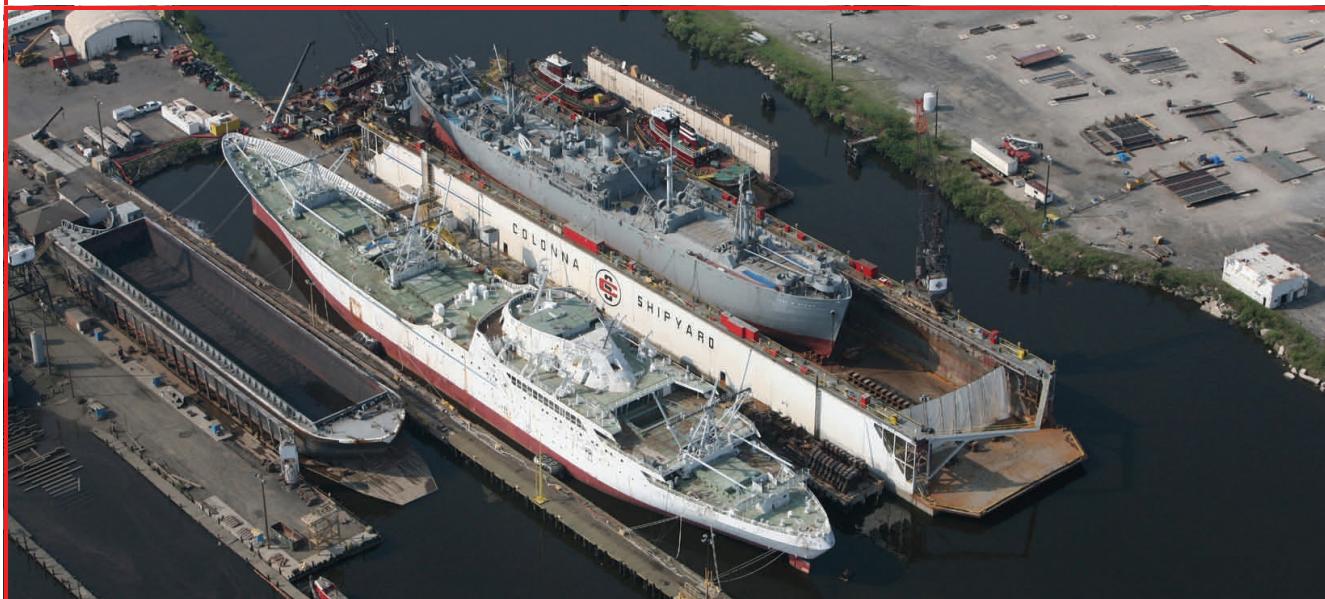


Photo by Backus Aerial

The sleek lines of the Nuclear Ship *Savannah* are a stark contrast alongside the battleship gray of the World War II-era Liberty Ship *John W. Brown* at the Colonna's Shipyards in Norfolk, Va.

For a few days this fall, the Nuclear Ship *Savannah* and the Liberty Ship *John W. Brown* were docked side by side at Colonna's Shipyard, in Norfolk, Va.

Both ships have close associations with MARAD. The "ugly ducking" Liberty Ships were built under the direction of MARAD's predecessor agency, the War Shipping Administration, and the Maritime Administration cooperated with several other agencies in building the graceful *Savannah* as part of the Eisenhower Administration's "Atoms for Peace" program. Its one-of-a-kind construction was a joint project of the Maritime Administration and the

Atomic Energy Commission.

The *Brown* was one of 2,700 Liberty ships quickly constructed in the early years of World War II, as the War Shipping Administration geared up for the largest sealift in history. Liberty ships carried two-thirds of the cargo that left the United States during the war. Although enemy action sank 200 of them, American workers turned them out so fast that the convoys kept going, and the supplies got through.

*Savannah* was in the shipyard undergoing topside repairs in preparation for its nuclear decommissioning.

The *Brown* was in for a hull inspection, painting,

installation of anodes and shaft inspections.

Both ships spent time in the James River Reserve fleet.

The *Brown* was put in the James River facility after its service as a school ship ended in 1982. Project Liberty Ship acquired the ship in 1988, and has made it into a successful museum, one of two Liberties to survive as a fully operational ship.

After the *Savannah* retired from active sailing in 1971, it served as a museum ship, and then stayed in the James River fleet site after 1994 until it was taken to Colonna's in August.

(Navy Reserve Lt. Cdr. Eric J. Gardner also contributed to this article.)